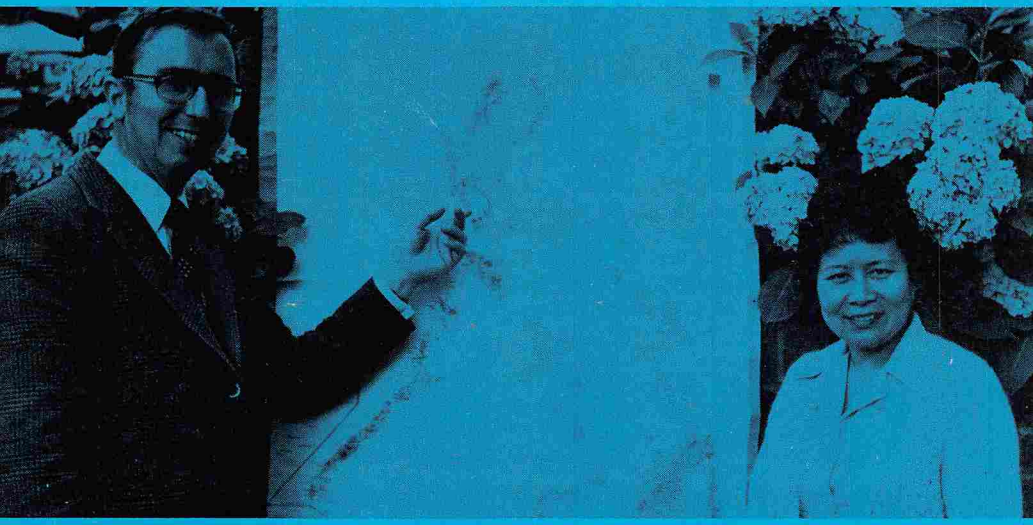
REFORMATION TODAY '77



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Notices

Trinity Ministerial Academy. Pastor Al Martin with the elders and members of Trinity Baptist Church, Essex Fells, New Jersey, are commencing a local-church-based academy for those training for the ministry. We had hoped in this issue to describe this outstanding venture but hold over the material. A prospectus can be obtained by writing to Box 277, Essex Fells, N.J. 07021.

Carey Publications. When publishers put down publication dates they should say that is only the date aimed at for a new title! Although the printer is doing his best it is unlikely that *The Believer's Experience* scheduled for September will be on time.

Grace Hymn Book. Reviewed in R.T. 38 this hymn book now sells at £1.25 (Music edition £5.50 post extra). Order from Evangelical Press, Blossomgate, Ripon, N. Yorkshire, HC4 2AJ.

Pastor Douglas Jones is due to lead a party to Israel, 6-20 May, 1978. Write for information to 156 Finlay Road, Gloucester, GL4 9TF.

Cover picture: *Brian and Necy Ellis.*

The Philippines comprise a group over 7,000 islands of which 700 are inhabited. The population is 45 million, increasing by about one and a half million a year. Filipino, or Tagalog, is the national language, with English spoken by about 50% as a second language. Over 80% of the population is nominally Roman Catholic, as a result of Spanish domination in the past. Only 3% are Protestant, and of the Protestant churches not all are evangelical. There is an open door for missions and the country enjoys a measure of stability and law and order.

Brian and Necy Ellis have been engaged in a church planting ministry in the rural area of the Philippines since 1968. Brian was originally a school teacher and Necy, a Filipino, was his language teacher when he was in Singapore before going on to the Philippines.

They are members of the Baptist church in Wattisham and hope soon to take up a new ministry in Manila, the capital of the country, which will be directly sponsored by their home church, with financial help from other churches and from S.B.M. Brian and Necy were formerly under the auspices of the O.M.F.

Their aim is to establish in Manila, a city of four and a half million people including a quarter of a million college students, a Baptist church holding the doctrines of free grace. They seek our prayers that they may be directed in obtaining contacts, settling in the right area, and securing suitable accommodation.

Together with church work will be literature distribution on behalf of Evangelical Press, who are willing to supply good books at a price people can afford. Books generally cost a great deal in the Philippines.

Also it is hoped that there may be an opening for broadcasting over the Far East Broadcasting Companies Philippines network. The follow up of listeners enquiries could be extensive.

There is great opportunity and Brian and Necy go forward in faith that God will use them according to his will.

Editorial

ROBERT OLIVER BRINGS TO A CONCLUSION HIS HELPFUL SERIES ON THE legacy that is ours from the 19th century. This is one of the most enlightening series we have printed. A copy of *R.T. 38* was given to an Anglican minister who had never seen the magazine before and that was the first article he and his wife turned to.

Conference Work

Herbert Carson fulfilled 42 speaking engagements in 21 days during his tour of Australia and New Zealand and earned a well deserved rest in the Northern Transvaal, where, with his wife Delphine, he joined his daughter Pat who is working there as a nurse in a mission hospital. Geoff Thomas successfully completed his preaching tour of South Africa. George Stranex writes to say that the annual interdenominational and multiracial Conference went well despite the absence of many of those usually able to attend. Clive Tyler was in England, Robin Wells tied up with work and Jim Van Zyl on the sick list. Political flare-ups were avoided and spiritual edification enjoyed. Soweto was represented as well as our Indian and Coloured brethren. The pentecostal pastor, Jonathan Leach brightened the scene. Ian Wylie of the Dutch Reformed Church looked after the bookstall with Ian Thomas. Eiffion Evans of Wales was the main speaker.

Our friends on the West Coast of America completed their third conference. Growth is evident by the number of newly planted churches represented. The number of Sovereign Grace Conferences is multiplying in America to meet the needs of the enormous area of territory represented.

The annual Carey Conference for ministers is planned to take place at Liverpool from 3rd to 6th next January. Subjects so far decided upon are The significance of Andrew Fuller (Frank Ellis) and the nurture of the young convert (Chris Robinson). Other subjects which may be handled are contemporaneity in worship, and especially in preaching; The development of gifts within the local church; and further work on evangelism.

The current adverse economic climate hit the family conferences this year. It will be helpful if the churches can think in terms of assisting their ministers, especially since the work involved forms a legitimate expense when pay rises are restrained.

Bill Carey and Michael Drake

After seven years of service to *Reformation Today* Bill Carey has asked to be temporarily relieved of his duties while he moves home to Wilmington and sets up in private business. We sincerely hope that he will not find this as difficult as he anticipates and that he will be able to partner with us again in due time.

Michael Drake has been recognised as an elder in the church at Auckland, New Zealand. We are grateful to him and all the agents for their enterprising and persevering work.

Are Christians entitled to pray to the Holy Spirit?

By S. M. Houghton

1. Prayer is commonly addressed to God—the Triune God is an indivisible Trinity of Persons—and the word 'God' necessarily includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This consideration in and of itself implies that to include the Spirit in prayer and supplication is not and cannot be contrary to the mind of God or to the revelation of God in holy scripture.

2. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, possessed of all that attaches to personality. He is a Person equally with the Father and the Son. If we may address the Father and the Son, do we sin if we address the Spirit also?

3. Some have suggested that John 16:13—'when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth'—implies that if we address the Spirit of God in prayer a. we act contrary to the office assigned to the Spirit in the plan of salvation, namely, that he is sent to glorify Christ, because b. if he speaks of himself he is not thereby glorifying Christ. But this is *not* the meaning of John 16:13. The word 'of' in the expression 'he shall not speak of himself' does not mean 'about' himself, but '*from*' himself. Sundry versions so translate it. The expression means that, just as Christ did not speak to believers (and indeed to non-believers also) from himself, but only in words he had heard and received from the Father (as he said on more than one occasion), so too the Spirit would not minister that which proceeded from himself alone, as if spoken on his sole authority, but only that which proceeded from the Father and the Son, and with which he was in perfect agreement.

4. In the NT in many places the Father and the Son speak to one another (e.g. John 17) in the most intimate manner imaginable, but there is nothing of a similar kind that relates to the Holy Spirit. But if we were to argue from this that, in the communion of divine Persons one with another, the Father and the Son never speak to the Spirit, and are never spoken to by the Spirit, would we not greatly err?

5. In Ezekiel 37 where 'wind' and 'breath' are mentioned, the Hebrew word as there used is 'ruach' (=wind, breath, spirit). In verse 9 of the chapter the prophet is commanded to address the wind, and he says, 'Come from the four winds, O breath'. But the wind or breath here typifies the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life. And he is addressed by the prophet!

6. In Acts 13:1-2 certain believers minister to the Lord and engage in fasting, whereupon the Holy Spirit says to them, 'Seperate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them'. Actually a small Greek word (de) of two letters is in the second verse, but is not translated in the AV. It can be translated, 'Separate me, then, Barnabas and Saul etc.', and so can bear the interpretation, 'In view of your praying, proceed to separate me etc.'. The implication is that the church had been praying, as it were, to the Holy Spirit. It would almost seem to be a case where the Spirit speaks expressly, as he is said to do in 1 Timothy 4:1.

7. The Holy Spirit as a living Person indwells believers as a temple. May he not speak therefore to believers at times as 'the Lord the Spirit' inhabiting that temple, similarly maybe to the case of young Samuel. The Lord came and stood and called to Samuel by name (1 Sam. 3:10). The young child did not understand the implications of the remarkable event, but under Eli's instruction he learned how to act and to respond. 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' Is the NT believer less favoured?

8. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God's Son (Gal. 4:6) and the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15). He is sent into believers' hearts crying Abba, Father.

'Unworthy dwelling! glorious Guest!
Favour astonishing, divine!'

The word 'Guest' as used by Anne Steele is certainly permissible, as also it would have been of our Lord Jesus Christ, say, in the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany where he was ever welcome as 'the perfect Guest'. And as men and women spoke and conversed with their Saviour and Lord in their earthly dwelling, may we not speak to our unspeakably glorious Guest, the Spirit?

9. Believers can grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). When they sin they do so. And when they repent of such sin, is it unthinkable that they should express their sorrow and grief to the one against whom they have sinned, that is to say, to him by whom they have access through Christ (their only Mediator) to the Father?

10. It is undeniably the case that some of the choicest of God's saints have felt not the slightest hesitation in speaking to, and singing to, the Holy Spirit. Take such a hymn as

Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed,
With us to dwell.

It surely breathes the very spirit of the New Testament, and its closing verse addresses the Holy Spirit with the utmost reverence—

Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness pitying see,
O make our hearts thy dwelling place,
And worthier thee.

If the Spirit and the bride can unite together with one voice in saying 'Come' to the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 22:17), is the bride (the Church) forbidden ever to speak to the Spirit? to pray to the spirit?

(This article first appeared in the *Bible League Quarterly* of which Mr. Houghton is the editor.)

The third and final article on the Nineteenth Century by Robert Oliver.

The Legacy of the Nineteenth Century

The Weaknesses of Evangelicalism

IN PREVIOUS ARTICLES WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE COLLAPSE OF EVANGELICALISM as a force in the land was one of the features of the nineteenth century. The Eighteenth-Century Revival had given the Evangelicals the initiative, so that in the early years of the nineteenth century they seemed set for a great expansion at home and abroad. In fact, their influence long continued. The Gospel was not only preached from many a pulpit, but it was also the controlling force in the lives of many in every rank of society. However, new forces arose and began to make inroads into the religious life of the country. The Oxford men, fascinated by the beliefs and practices of the Church of Rome, gained an amazing following. At the same time the new higher criticism took hold with such success that all the larger denominations had been infiltrated by 1914.

Growing divisions within the ranks of the Evangelicals weakened them in the face of these encroachments. The excesses of Irvingism were followed by the peculiar emphases of Darbyism, which was ultimately to prove a divisive movement. Historic Calvinism weakened as Hyper-Calvinists on the one hand and Arminians on the other developed their respective positions. These things were all happening at a time when Evangelicals were tending to lose interest in the Church and were seeking fellowship in various extra-church fellowships. To understand how these developments could take place, we need to consider certain weaknesses within the Evangelicalism of the time.

1. *A lack of expository and doctrinal preaching*

By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the old practice of systematic expository preaching seems to have disappeared. It had survived into the eighteenth century. John Gill pursued this method at Carter Lane, as had William Romaine in his Anglican pulpits. Inevitably the itinerant preaching of the Revival had disrupted the practice and many pastors carried the practice of preaching from unconnected texts and subjects into their regular pulpit ministries. Andrew Fuller had attempted to revive the older method, but in the next generation the sermon appeared to be on the way to becoming a work of art, rather than a means of dealing with men's deepest needs. By the time of Robert Hall, junior, there was an interest in outstanding oratory. John Elias was to call attention to the obscuring of the cross by the flowers of John Angell James's preaching. C. H. Spurgeon returned to solid exposition and a direct dealing with men's souls, but even he was opposed to the practice of systematic exposition, which, he considered, fettered the minister. Untaught congregations grew up because they were not exposed to the whole counsel of God.

Much of the preaching was not explicitly doctrinal. The doctrine was assumed, but not spelt out. R. W. Dale later wrote, 'The old Calvinistic phrases, the old Calvinistic definitions were still on the lips of the Independents when George III died; but in the spirit and tendency of their theology they were Calvinists no longer.' This is probably an exaggeration, but it indicates the tendency. William Jay commented, 'I have always deemed the best kind of preaching is neither highly doctrinal or drily practical; but distinguished by what I would call experimentality or a constant blending of the Gospel strongly with the affections and feelings.' Jay may well have maintained the balance, but lesser men did not. This was disastrous. At the time of the Oxford Movement one of the charges thrown at Evangelical Anglicans was their lack of doctrine. John Henry Newman wrote, 'From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion.' The Tractarians pursued their studies with a zeal which shamed their contemporaries. They were coming to wrong conclusions and moving in a wrong direction but their energy was often phenomenal. Before he seceded to Rome, H. E. Manning lost not a moment for study, even fixing a lamp in his carriage so that he could continue with his reading. Robert Wilberforce in his Yorkshire rectory was toiling away at works on the Incarnation, Baptism and the Eucharist.

Turning to the Clapham Sect, it is difficult to avoid the feeling that these men expected their children to catch Evangelicalism rather than be taught it. William Wilberforce and John Sargent were stalwarts, but it is amazing to see how Romanism triumphed in their families. Wilberforce had been a great admirer of John Newton, who compared his Calvinism to the sweetness of a lump of sugar in solution in a cup of tea.

A similar feature can be seen in the ministry of John Angell James. His successor, R. W. Dale, began to preach doctrinal sermons at Carr's Lane, Birmingham. He tells us that he was met by a Welsh preacher, who said, 'I hear you are preaching doctrinal sermons to the congregation at Carr's Lane; they will not stand it.' To this Dale's reply was, 'They will have to stand it!' Dale's preaching on Romans had already caused unrest, because of a suspicion of error, but Angell James had intervened in the debate, claiming that the doubtful notes were the excesses of a young man. After the older minister's death, Dale was to assert that James 'could never give a thorough explanation of any point of doctrine'. To read John Angell James's sermons is to show that this statement is untrue, but it remains a fact that the Carr's Lane Church was not able to resist the move from Calvinism to a non-Evangelical position, which took place under R. W. Dale.

2. *Neglect of the Doctrine of the Church*

The men used of God to stir the life of the nation in the eighteenth century were at first ministers of the Church of England. Although some of these men were forced increasingly to work outside the Established Church, there was no general re-examination of church issues. The Evangelicals, who remained in the Church of England, accepted the system as useful, but did not consider all its details as essential. William Wilberforce seems to have considered episcopacy as admirably suited to the English class system. His son Samuel noted his father's reflections on the Scottish nobility, 'They were in general far behind ours in morality and religion and he traced it to their having no regular church establishment. For that as they had no bishops or other dignitaries of the church, whom they might consider as of equal rank with themselves, they looked down upon the clergy as on an inferior class of persons.'

Dissenters too had gently developed with the years and showed little tendency to ask fundamental questions about the church. By the end of the eighteenth century, all pastoral work devolved upon the minister and the office of elder was practically extinct in England. Robert Hall was probably typical of many, when he doubted whether any form of church government was laid down in the New Testament and felt disposed to adopt the maxim, 'Whatever is best administered is best'.

The need for clear thinking was exposed first of all in the Church of England. The Tractarians were able to raise a protest against state control, which the Evangelicals could not answer. They went further and raised the whole question of authority. Years after his secession to Rome, Manning declared that the problem which had nagged him as an Evangelical was, 'What right have you to be teaching, admonishing, reforming and rebuking others? By what authority do you lift the latch of a poor man's door and enter and sit down and begin to instruct and correct him? This train of thought led me to see that no culture or

knowledge of Greek and Latin would suffice for this. That if I was not a messenger sent from God, I was an intruder and impertinent.' Manning came to the conclusion that the apostolic succession supplied the answer to his questions. Unfortunately, too many of his contemporaries saw the answer in terms of status of Eton and Oxford or Cambridge.

3. *Divided Ranks*

Internal division has always perplexed Evangelicals. The Eighteenth-Century Revival went far in bridging the gap which had yawned between Anglicanism and Nonconformity since 1662. Whitefield's catholic spirit is well known and it certainly strengthened as the years rolled on. Rowland Hill and the Countess of Huntingdon were also able to strengthen the links between Evangelical Christians of different backgrounds. Later, William Jay and William Wilberforce were close friends to the embarrassment of the latter's sons. Robert Hall's earnest pleas for open communion helped to make Baptists look at the whole question of sectarianism and may also have made many non-Baptists look again at the Baptist position.

Unhappily, divisions hardened during the twenties and thirties. We have already seen moderates and radicals moving apart in the 1820s as a result, in part, of the influence of Irving. Before the question of Apostolic gifts became a life issue, a strong emphasis on the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy was driving in a wedge. There are indications of a more deeply entrenched Anglicanism. Certainly Charles Simeon became more rigid as the years passed. At this time there was a fierce Nonconformist agitation against the Established Church. This is in great measure understandable, when one remembers that Dissenters were still obliged to pay Church Rates and Tithes and could suffer a number of inconveniences even after 1828. Unfortunately much of the controversy was carried on at a very low level.

Christian truth is the only basis of Christian unity. The Church's perennial need is to be exposed to the whole counsel of God and so to this task Christian ministers must give themselves. At the same time we need to beware of the danger of sectarianism, that is, extending our Christian love and concern only to that part of the Church which agrees with us. There will always be tension between the need to be faithful to God and his truth and the requirement to love our brethren in Christ who do not completely agree with us. The problem was there in the nineteenth century and it is certainly with us today. Our task is one of reformation as we struggle to cope with our legacy of problems. We need to see the problems historically and to grasp the answers in terms of Scripture and, as we do so, to heed the Apostle Paul's admonition to 'speak the truth in love'.

The qualifications for elders, deacons and women workers

IN PREVIOUS STUDIES WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE EVIDENCE POINTS TO THE fact that there is only one office of spiritual oversight and authority in the ongoing church, namely, that of the elders. To them is entrusted the work of oversight and teaching for which responsibility they must give account to the chief Shepherd in due course (Heb. 13:17).

Only two offices are stipulated, the other being that of the deacons (Phil. 1:1). As we have seen all members in the body of Christ without exception have a function (Rom. 12:6-8), and most members have a realm in which they serve. The difference between function and service is that the invisible, spiritual, yet essential activity of prayer is regarded as a function whereas service is associated with visible, practical, tangible effort in rendering help or benefit to others.

What is a deacon?

We rightly think of our Lord as prophet, priest and king. He is first in the order of all prophets and the high priest over all priests and king of kings. But we seldom think of Christ as the first deacon and head of all deacons. The words used to describe our Lord's ministry is the same word used for deacon which means one who serves. Literally the Greek verb, *diakoneo*, means I wait at table. It refers particularly to a slave who pours out wine for the guests, but it means to serve in a general sense. The noun means simply a waiter or a servant. Our Lord fulfilled the role of a waiter or servant in the most menial sense when he girded himself with a towel and washed his disciples' feet. It is most encouraging to think of our Lord's example both as a carpenter for eighteen years and as one who did not hesitate to wait on others.

He declared, 'for even the Son of Man came not to be ministered (deaconed) unto, but to minister (deacon) and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). The Messiah in his humiliation did not come into the world to be waited on or to be personally served by others but rather to wait on others himself. This was true not only of his domestic life but also in his ministry of three years. Most emphatically was it true of the culmination of his life and ministry which was the substitutionary sacrifice which he made. He voluntarily took our place. He came in the

form of a servant and humbled himself even to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:7).

As there are those who emerge as shepherds or elders, so there are those in the churches who become outstanding in the role of service or deaconing.

The work and responsibilities of the elders we have studied, but what about the deacons? What is the service they render? The answer to that is service of every kind except that of oversight and teaching which belongs to the elders. All elders are involved in administrative or deaconing work to some extent. One of the purposes of the deacons is to relieve the elders of that work so that the elders may devote themselves more to prayer, the Word and shepherding.

The account of the appointment of the seven deacons in Acts 6 gives a description of their work as a service of tables. This involved the work of accountancy combined with pastoral work in the sense that they had to deal with personal problems and make crucial judgments as to the just and fair distribution of the funds. It is superficial to think that the work of the elders is only spiritual and that of the deacons only or exclusively practical. The deacons were filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom because all their work required to be done in an excellent way, pleasing to God, which is spiritual. Also it is inadequate to think in terms of water-tight compartments. Some deacons may have an ability to expound or teach, but that does not automatically make them competent shepherds. Likewise some elders might also be superb deacons and therefore need to resist the temptation to neglect their pastoral work in favour of work which is more practical and which involves less nervous strain.

There has been a tendency in some quarters to regard deacons merely as efficient machines who have nothing to do with shepherding. The character requirements for the deacon however show that they should have some ability to be able to encourage people. Indeed the dynamic of deaconing is the ability to stimulate, strengthen, increase and organise service throughout the church. A deacon recognised in the formal sense is a leading server among the other servers of a church. Most of the members render help of some kind and what is needed is the collation and happy organisation and improvement of that service as a whole.

Service in an average church will include the keeping of finances and accounts; oversight of support for missionaries and recently planted churches; maintenance of the premises; administration of the practical details concerning the services, Sunday School and any other meetings that are convened; the sustaining of a bookstall and library, tape recording and weekly visitation of shut-ins with cassettes as well as maintenance of a cassette lending library; typing and secretarial work, the filing of correspondence and records; the visitation and dispensing of help to needy people; the organisation of meetings in hospitals and homes for the

elderly; the organisation of transport; the arranging of summer camps or conferences; the promotion of literature work or radio work; the upkeep of the church buildings, properties and gardens and the promotion of building programmes. In some cases administrative responsibilities include the running of institutions created by the church such as orphanages, homes for the elderly or schools or an academy for ministerial training.

Before the establishment of welfare societies there was a much greater emphasis on the role of deacons in visiting and giving help to the destitute and needy. In the first recorded instance of the appointment of deacons this was so (Acts 6:1-4). The seven deacons not only gathered the funds and kept records but dealt personally with the needs of the widows. This was their full-time work. We know for sure that two in particular advanced in other areas of service. Philip later became an evangelist.

Women are capable of most if not all the services mentioned above and in most churches many of the services referred to are fulfilled by women. An interesting observation is that the churches are served by sidesmen who welcome the visitors, *never* sideswomen. Have 'women's lib' overlooked this feature? You will not find the saying in Scripture but it could be said 'does not human nature teach that it is a shame for a church to have sideswomen!'

The reference to women is important because they are included in the passage which deals with qualifications for service. 1 Timothy 3:11 reads, 'women must likewise be dignified' (N.A.S.B.). This need not refer to the wives of elders or deacons although it is not difficult to show by inference that the wives of such should also pass the tests of 1 Timothy 3:11.

The reference to women shows that they were recognised in various capacities of service in the early church. Phoebe is called a minister (deacon) of the church at Cenchrea. Caution is needed about creating a special office for deaconesses since this is the only reference apart from 1 Timothy 3:11. What we can be sure of is that good character must be possessed by women before they are entrusted with responsible service. The term 'likewise' or similarly (hosautos = in the same way) occurs both with regard to the deacons (1 Tim. 3:8) and the women (1 Tim. 3:11). The term points to the fact that the set of principles stated is to be applied in the same way to them as to the elders. In other words the qualifications are to be observed as a safeguard. Those who have the gifts of eldership or deaconing or who serve as women should not be encouraged as servers if they do not possess the necessary qualifications. For instance if a person is prone to drunkenness or is dishonest it nullifies his work no matter how well he may do it. The qualifications must be fully met in the case of recognising and ordaining those who have been proved in the

realm of shepherding or deaconing. In the case of a woman occupying an important role, such as secretary or accountant, she should not be encouraged, let alone recognised in the formal sense if she is known to be a slanderer, a gossip or unfaithful in any way.

How many churches actually fulfil 1 Timothy 3:11 in practice? If they interpret the women to be the wives of the elders and deacons do they insist on the application of the verse? Or if they take it to refer to women workers is the content of the verse applied?

A class of widow women is specified in 1 Timothy 5:9,10. It is presumed that these qualified for financial support. They may in return have rendered service for the church. It is not the same class of women as that referred to in 1 Timothy 3:11, but the stress on worthy character is similar. The requirements of 1 Timothy 5:9,10 as stated in the N.I.V. are as follows:

1. A widow over sixty
2. Has been faithful to her husband
3. Is well known for her good deeds
4. Such as bringing up children
5. Showing hospitality
6. Washing the feet of the saints
7. Helping those in trouble
8. And devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

It will be helpful to refer now to the qualifications required for elders and deacons and then deal with these before we go on to make general observations. Detailed exposition of the specific points can follow in a later issue.

The differences between the qualifications specified for elders from Titus and Timothy and for deacons should be easy to follow as we compare them alongside each other as follows:

Elders according to the Titus 1:5-9 passage	*Elders according to* the 1 Timothy 3:1-7 passage	*Deacons according to* 1 Timothy 3:8-10 & 12,13
1. Blameless (repeated in v.7)	1. Blameless	7. Being found blameless having been proved
2. The husband of one wife	2. The husband of one wife	8. The husband of one wife
3. having faithful children	14. one that ruleth well his own house	9. ruling their children and their own houses well

4. not accused of riot or unruly	15. having his children in subjection with all gravity (and see that his children obey him with proper respect N.I.V.)	
5. not self willed		
6. not soon angry	12. not a brawler	
7. not given to wine	8. not given to wine	3. not given to much wine
8. no striker	9. no striker	
9. not given to filthy lucre	10. not greedy of filthy lucre	4. not greedy of filthy lucre
10. but a lover of hospitality	6. given to hospitality	
11. a lover of good men		
12. sober	4. sober	1. grave (semnous) meaning worthy of respect N.I.V., or men of dignity N.A.S.B.
13. just		
14. holy		
15. temperate (egkrate)	3. vigilant (nephaliov) temperate (N.A.S.B. & N.I.V.)	
16. holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gain-sayers	7. apt at teaching	
	5. of good behaviour (kosmiov) respectable (N.I.V. & N.A.S.B.) orderly (G.N.B.)	
	11. patient	
	13. not covetous	
	16. not a novice	6. and let these first be proved
	17. he must have a good report of them that are without	
		2. not doubletongued (dilogous)
		5. holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience

Observe the differences between what he wrote to Timothy and Titus. The points are by no means identical. This indicates an observation of character according to the social conditions. For instance how does a man show up in a society where intemperance of one kind or another is prevalent.

The first word in each case gives us the clue to the rest. The apostle was concerned with trustworthiness or dependability, with men of irreproachable character. This is a *must* for every officer. A serious fault may exist which is not stated in the list which would disqualify a man from office. For instance Jay Adams believes that bad manners disqualify a man.

With regard to the elders the qualifications cited presuppose the foundational abilities of leadership and ability to shepherd and teach. The essential quality of strong or robust personality is seen in the need to be able to admonish, reprove and counsel (1 Thes. 5:12). The teaching function is merely referred to as an aptitude to teach but writing to Titus Paul stresses the requirement of skill to be able to correct those who oppose sound doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17 speaks of those elders who specialise or devote themselves more fully to labour in the Word and doctrine but all elders should have adequate knowledge to refute error or heresy.

The character of a man is obviously put to the test and seen in the home first. How does he lead and govern his household? Then Paul offers several general negative tests followed by positive requirements.

No mention is made of novices (new converts) in the Titus passage but those young men whose only experience of life is that of college would need to be outstanding to qualify because the vulnerability of the inexperienced is obvious. Not a few have come to grief where the credential of experience has been bypassed. The danger of pride is heavily underlined.

The importance of experience is suggested strongly by the insistence that a man be a competent ruler of his own household. This of course does not debar bachelors whose abilities at leadership nevertheless need to be conspicuous and whose whole behaviour towards women requires to be exemplary.

The corporate nature of the church (1 Cor. 12, Eph. 4:16 and Rom. 12:5) suggests that nothing but the most harmonious and happy cooperation should exist at all levels and in all aspects of a local church's life and service. The cooperation between the elders and deacons should epitomise this happy cooperation since the officers represent the leadership itself. We can see therefore why the same qualities of character apply to both elders and deacons, the difference lying only in the nature of the

authority represented, the role of teaching and hospitality. This does not mean that deacons are exempt from the responsibility of hospitality. They, like the elders, are required to rule their houses well. If they do this is unlikely that they will lack in giving hospitality but this qualification is not insisted upon for deacons.

The qualities of honesty, spirituality (full of the Holy Spirit) and wisdom were highlighted in the choice of the first deacons who were almost certainly full-time in their office (Acts 6:1-4). Their work would involve much personal contact in the homes. With the culture of those times we can understand why Paul warned Timothy not to appoint deacons if they had too much liking for wine. They would be very unsteady on their feet after several glasses at each home visited! The sight of a rolling winebibber going from house to house in the name of the church would hardly commend the Gospel to the neighbourhood! Likewise for one constantly handling the funds it would not be difficult to find a pretext to use some for his own ends. The deacon therefore had to be one who was fully free from lucre lust.

To be continued

Correspondence

Dear Mr. Hulse,

Your invitation for readers suggestions as to how Reformation can be encouraged within B.U. Churches has prompted me to write. Certainly the B.U. as such is, humanly speaking, beyond reformation.

My own experience over the past few years may be helpful. Four years ago I received a call from a local B.U. church to become its lay pastor. After several months of talks with the deacons, prayerful heart-searchings, misgivings about the questions of compromise, guilt by association and so on, I accepted the call.

After four years ministry I have reached these conclusions:

1. It is preferable for this congregation to sit under my ministry (with all its shortcomings), which is evangelical reformed, than to have a conglomerate of itinerant preachers which would inevitably include, modernists, liberals, ecumenists, charismatics and extreme arminians.

2. Reformation has and is taking place, we have been able to introduce preachers who have an expository ministry which instructs and builds up the people in spiritual stature.

3. Our young people's work has become associated with evangelical churches rather than liberal groups.

4. We have a bookstall kindly supplied by The Good News Missionary Trailer Missionary Fellowship. We are not selling a lot of Owen, Sibbes, Edwards etc., but the people are beginning to read books with substance to them. For instance amongst the books which have been bought (or borrowed) are, Pink's *Elijah* and *Sovereignty of God;* Iain Murray's *The Forgotten Spurgeon;* the two new Banner paperbacks *Korean Pentecost* and *Unlisted Legion*, your own *Introduction to the Baptists*, Peter

(continued on inside back cover)

The Reviewer's Review Reviewed

Few of our readers would have read Dr. John R. de Witt's review of David Kingdon's book, *Children of Abraham* (104 pp, £1.20, Carey Publications), which appeared in the 1975 Winter issue of the *Westminster Theological Journal.*

Unhappily much of the seventeen pages was wasted with emotive personal issues and was written in a pompous paternalistic fashion. It is our hope that David Kingdon's reply will terminate once and for all the petty issues which are not germane to the subject. These could have been ignored were it not for the fact that some will have been put off reading David Kingdon's book by the unfortunate review.

It will be helpful if both sides of this debate concede that the positions have been carefully worked out.

The title above includes the word 'Reviewer's' because it reminds us of the reviewer as well as his review. We hope that John de Witt will not again resort to the smokescreen method. We appeal to American readers in particular to circulate this issue of *Reformation Today* to those who may have read the original review. Also we would appreciate the names and addresses of theological colleges and seminaries and libraries that David Kingdon's reply might stand alongside the de Witt review.

Headings have been inserted to aid readers pick up the issues involved and help return to points for reference purposes. The main body of what follows is expository in style which can be followed even if Dr. de Witt's review has not been read.

These issues are important. There is no short cut in this subject. We simply have to keep our minds in training. As athletes keep their bodies in daily trim so must we keep our powers of reason in constant exercise. Almost everything today is prepared for us in an easy-to-read journalistic style. This is all very well but it can encourage lazy minds which baulk when it comes to material requiring concentration and analysis. To return to our illustration those who wish to get fit start with gentle, short jogs. It is dangerous to try and break records on the first outing. If you are not accustomed to polemical writing it is suggested that you conquer the following article, bit by bit, piece by piece, paragraph by paragraph, over a few days rather than attempt it all at once.

A Review Reviewed

by David Kingdon

It is not often that a book of one hundred pages receives a review of seventeen large pages of small print. Such has been my privilege(!) In the Winter 1975 issue of the Westminster Theological Journal Dr. John R. de Witt contributes a review article entitled 'Children and the Covenant of Grace' of my book *The Children of Abraham* (Carey Press 1973).

Flippancy!

Certain aspects of my book cause Dr. Witt such distress that he feels it necessary to administer a public rebuke to me. In particular my lack of respect for 'holy and godly men' (p. 248) amounting to 'flippancy' and carelessness requires to be spoken against and rebuked. Dr. de Witt also takes exception to my use of words such as 'elation' and 'diatribe'.

Before I repent in sack cloth and ashes it needs to be ascertained whether de Witt's strictures are justified. How am I guilty of disrespect when I use the word

'elation' in the following sentence: 'One can almost sense Professor Murray's elation as he throws out the following challenge to the Baptists?' De Witt establishes his case to his satisfaction in the following statement. 'Anyone in the least acquainted with Prof. John Murray knows that he would take such a matter with the greatest seriousness. And he is not a man to feel *cheap* elation as he sets forth his case. His interest is not that of a partisan, but that of the ascertainment of the truth' (my italics p. 246).

Cheap!

Now let us see what de Witt has done? He has inserted the smear-word 'cheap' into his argument, thus implying that I accuse the late Prof. Murray of harbouring an *unworthy* emotion. I do nothing of the sort for the Oxford Shorter English Dictionary defines elation as 'elevation of mind arising from success' or 'elevation of spirits', which it accepts as the usual current usage. Now there is not a hint here that elation is a cheap emotion. Nor does Dr. de Witt make it clear why a theologian who is sure of his ground, as Prof. Murray was on the issue of baptism, should not feel elation. And how does feeling elation establish that a man's interest is that of a partisan, unconcerned as to the ascertainment of the truth? I feel elation as I preach the doctrines of grace precisely because they are true. I hope Dr. de Witt does too.

Dr. de Witt also objects to my employment of the word 'diatribe' when I comment on a quotation from Pierre Marcel's book on baptism. He gives what he describes as the current definition of a diatribe as 'a bitter or abusive harangue'. He does not specify his source, but in reply I will specify mine. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines a diatribe as 'a dissertation directed against some person or work; a bitter and violent criticism, an invective'. Now what I meant to convey by the use of the word diatribe was the former part of the definition. To my mind Marcel mounts a sharp attack on those who to his view divide the covenant. Dr. de Witt has chosen the worst possible definition in order to set my remark in the worse possible light. Is this charitable?

External and internal participation in the covenant

He also finds it a matter for complaint that I say, in reply to Marcel's strictures, that Paedobaptists in their better moments, that is when they are not having to defend infant baptism, speak of an external and internal participation in the covenant, adding that 'there is no other interpretation that makes sense'. According to de Witt I ought to have said there is no other interpretation which makes sense *to me*. However, he ignores the footnote on page 37, in which I quote Thomas Shepard, a staunch paedobaptist to the effect 'that many who are inwardly, or in respect of inward covenant, the children of the devil, are outwardly, or in respect of internal covenant, children of God'. I can assure de Witt that many such statements of like import could be quoted from the writings of Reformed theologians. But more to the point can de Witt advance an interpretation of Galatians 4:21-31 which denies that there is an external as well as an internal participation in the Covenant, and which does make sense? Both Ishmael and Isaac received the rite of circumcision, but only Isaac participated inwardly in the covenant blessings. Until he can he ought not to object where I say that 'there is no other interpretation which makes sense'.

Unity between Baptists and non-Baptists

It also concerns de Witt that I speak of 'the lowest common denominator' approach to the whole issue of Christian unity. He chooses to interpret me as meaning that I think lightly of the unity which exists among Reformed brethren of both Baptist and non-Baptist persuasions. I think nothing of the kind. My remark was directed against those who think to advance the cause of unity by glossing over certain important differences. These I specify in a sentence which de Witt forebears to quote, as being over the doctrine of the Church, and the subjects and mode of baptism (p. 13).

I therefore hardly think it a fair reading of my remark for de Witt to conclude that

'In speaking so of our essential oneness Kingdon has struck a blow, not for unity among the true people of God, but for disunity; and to that extent he has done disservice to the Church as a whole and to his own connection in particular' (p. 241). Let me ask de Witt the following question. Would he be prepared to be a member of a church which allowed its members, on the ground of Christian charity, to choose between either infant baptism or believers' baptism; between either doctrine of the Church which excludes the children of believers as such or a doctrine of the Church that includes them? I suspect not, because de Witt's conscientious convictions are as deep as mine, and he recognises that our differences preclude the enjoyment of a full churchly unity.

The existence of a Calvinistic Baptist Tradition

De Witt also confesses to feeling 'something alien to dismay' that I 'assert the existence of a Calvinistic Baptist tradition, as if that possessed an individuality all its own and were self-originated and self-sustaining' (p. 241). I presume that de Witt is aware that there are Arminian Baptists who believe that the only theological tradition in Baptist history is Arminianism. Surely he would wish that they should be enlightened! Furthermore his theological precedessors have not been slow to hurl the epithet 'Anabaptist' indiscriminately at all Baptists whether Reformed or otherwise. Nor have some hesitated to teach that 'Anabaptists' should be put to death for practising believers' baptism. In the light of these facts I think I may be pardoned if I assert the existence of a specifically Calvinistic Baptist tradition. However, I defy de Witt to produce a scrap of evidence from my book to prove that I regard the Calvinistic Baptist tradition as possessing an individuality all of its own and that it is self-originated and self-sustaining. I am only too happy to acknowledge its indebtedness to Reformed theology in general, but I fail to see how such indebtedness tells against the existence of a distinctively Calvinistic Baptist tradition. It no more tells against the existence of such a tradition than does the term 'Southern Presbyterian' tell against the existence of a distinctive tradition within Presbyterianism in the United States.

Carping criticism a smokescreen to hide failure

It is unfortunate that I have had to spend so much time on matters of minor importance (and more could have been spent), but regrettably far too much of de Witt's review is taken up with carping criticism of the kind I have already mentioned. So much of it seems to me to result from his attempt to lay down what I would describe as theological smoke screen which hides his failure, by and large, to come to grips with the main contentions of my book.

TWO MAIN ISSUES, FIRSTLY CIRCUMCISION

Dr. de Witt makes two main criticisms of my book. First, he maintains that I contradict myself in stating on the one hand that 'circumcision may fairly be said to be the Old Testament counterpart of Christian baptism' (p. 29), while on the other that I insist that circumcision and baptism are not identical in meaning (pp. 33, 34). According to de Witt I therefore take away with one hand what I have granted with the other. And, though it distresses him to say so, I am in the sad company of those 'who employ the terminology of the historic Christian faith' but 'instead pour an entirely new content into the old words so that at last nothing remains of what was originally intended'.

Secondly, de Witt argues that because I deny that the children of believers as such no longer have covenantal significance it follows that I deny that God works along the lines of generations, and that therefore I am guilty, in the end, of maintaining the old atomism of a purely individualistic doctrine of conversion. He finds it significant that I should treat the subject of baptism without a single reference to the household passages, and he sees this omission as evidence of my 'inability to see the covenant principle, the organic principle of God's working through lives of generations' (p. 254).

The principle of birth connection abrogated

That there is an analogy between circumcision and baptism I maintain in the second chapter against those who, for various reasons, deny that there is. So I am happy to state that 'it is plain that baptism is close in meaning to the *symbolic* significance of circumcision' (p. 29), (my italics). But having done so I proceed to say that 'we must now enquire into the precise meaning and significance of that analogy'. After examining Genesis 17:1-14 and those passages of the New Testament which interpret circumcision I point out that both the promise of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) and the baptism of John indicate that the principle of birth connection is abrogated. (If my omission of the household passages is significant for de Witt his silence on what I have to say about John's baptism is even more significant.)

Baptism transcends circumcision

It is clear that de Witt thinks that because I admit there is an analogy between circumcision and baptism that there is, *therefore, an identity of meaning* between the two rites, and thus infants should be baptised because infants were circumcised under the old dispensation. Had de Witt read my book more carefully than he appears to have done, he would have seen that on page 45 I reject the notion that it is possible to speak of 'an analogy between baptism and circumcision in terms of *complete* identity' (my italics). In other words, to use the language of philosophy, I deny that between circumcision and baptism there is a univocal relationship. Rather, I maintain that there is an analogical relationship that the spiritual meaning of circumcision, while taken up into baptism, is far transcended by it.

Because de Witt maintains an identity between circumcision and baptism, he argues that the children of believers ought to be baptised. I argue to the contrary. Circumcision had, as baptism does not, a physical and national reference (see p. 31). As such it was administered to the organ of generation because in the Old Testament the covenant status was passed on from generation to generation by physical birth. In the New Testament dispensation this is no longer the case, for it is only those who are Christ's who are Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:29). Covenant status now depends upon union with Christ.

The NT form does not recognise the parent relationship

Patrick Fairbairn points up the difference in situation between the Old and New Testament dispensations. 'The difference in external form was in each case conditioned by the circumstances of the time. In circumcision it bore respect to *the propagation of offspring*, as it was through the production of a seed of blessing that the covenant, in its preparatory form, was to attain its realisation. But when the seed in that respect had reached its culminating point in Christ, and the objects of the covenant were no longer dependent on national propagation of seed, but were to be carried forward by spiritual means and influences used in connection with the faith of Christ, the external ordinance was fitly altered, so as to express simply a change of nature and state in the individual that received it. Undoubtedly the New Testament form less distinctly recognises the connection between parent and child—we should rather say, *does not of itself recognise that connection at all;* so much ought to be frankly conceded to those who disapprove of the practice of infant baptism, and will be conceded by all whose object is to ascertain the truth rather than content for an opinion.' Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, Oliphants edition 1953, Vol. i, pp. 313-314 (my italics except the last instance).

In fairness to Fairbairn it should be pointed out that he goes on to argue the case for baptising infants on the ground that 'it would be strange indeed if the liberty . . . to have their children brought by an initiating ordinance under the bond of the covenant, did not belong to parents under the Gospel (ibid., p. 315). However, he concludes that 'since this is a matter of inference rather than of positive enactment, those who do not

feel warranted to make such an application of the principle of the Old Testament ordinance to the New, should unquestionably be allowed their liberty of thought and action' (ibid., p. 315).

Circumcision typical only

The key issue which Fairbairn exposes is this: if circumcision 'bore respect to the propagation of offspring' because from it 'the seed of blessing' would arise in which 'the covenant, in its preparatory form, was to attain its realisation', then was the principle of the application of the sign and seal of the covenant to infants intended to be carried over into the era of the new covenant? Or, as Stuart Fowler states the matter, 'was the application of the sign and seal to infants under the old dispensation founded in an abiding principle of the covenant of grace, or was it found in a typical aspect of that new dispensation? If the former is the case we may expect some parallel in the new dispensation, but, if the latter, then there can be no prior assumption that the practice will be carried over to the new dispensation.' (*Christian Baptism—A Reformed Reply to a Reformed Paedobaptist*, Baptist Reformed Publications, Macleod West, Victoria, Australia 1968, p. 12.) In other words circumcision was typical only and not an abiding principle.

Dr. de Witt simply assumes that the application of the sign and seal to infants under the old dispensation is founded in an abiding principle of the covenant of grace. So for example he says, 'There is surely something very wrong and very confused about the contention that together with a part of what was promised (the land of Canaan) a part of those to whom the whole of the promise was made also falls away (the infant children of believers)' (p. 251). However, the issue which de Witt fails to face is this: if part of what was promised had a typical significance, could not the seed of Abraham have a typical significance as well?

It is my contention that the principle of applying the covenant sign of circumcision to *male* children (a point not sufficiently weighed in paedobaptist apologetic) was of typical significance, and therefore it no longer continues in force under the new dispensation.

Abraham's seed typical

Some of the evidence that the seed of Abraham had a typical significance is as follows. First, circumcision was administered to the male organ of generation, pointing to the fact that the promise included the propagation of an elect natural seed to be the bearer of the oracles of God and from which the Redeemer would arise. That the covenant sign was not administered to female infants nor to eunuchs supports this interpretation. Secondly, the Apostle Paul clearly states that the seed of Abraham has typical significance when he declares that, first of all, it is Christ the Seed who is in view: 'Now to Abraham and his seed was the promise made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ' (Gal. 3:16). The consequence which follows is that all who are Christ's, united with him in the eternal covenant of redemption, and manifested by a saving faith, are embraced within the covenant seed (Gal. 3:29; Rom. 4:13-16; Rom. 9:8).

In the covenant made with Abraham 'the eternal, spiritual inheritance of an elect spiritual seed was represented in typical form by an elect natural seed to whom was vouchsafed a temporal, earthly inheritance. It was on the basis of such a typical relationship that the sign and seal of the covenant was applied, not on any evidence of belonging to the spiritual seed, but to all those who belonged to the typical, natural seed' (Stuart Fowler, op. cit., p. 12).

Circumcision has passed away

When Christ, the substance, appeared, the necessity of representing a spiritual seed expecting a spiritual inheritance under the type of a natural seed expecting a temporal inheritance passed away. As a consequence circumcision the outward sign and seal of the covenant made with Abraham, was no longer appropriate, and thus it passed away. However, there is a further consequence, and this is crucial to the whole debate. If it was the

purpose of the Abrahamic covenant to exhibit under the typical form of an elect natural seed the spiritual seed to whom the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace belong, we would expect that when the new covenant sign of baptism was introduced the stipulation that it be applied to those standing in a natural relationship to the covenant people would be dropped, and that it would from then on be applied to those who, by exhibiting the evidences of saving faith, are presumed to be of the seed to whom the covenant now properly belongs.

Conclusion: natural birth connection not the point!

The interpretation that the Apostle Paul gives to the concept of 'the seed of Abraham' establishes the principle that the ordinance of baptism should now be applied only to those who show credible evidence of being in union with Christ, for only those in union with him are Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:29). It follows therefore that it would be out of harmony with the character of the new dispensation to retain a natural connection, of a typical character, as a prerequisite for now bestowing the sign and seal of baptism. Such a connection was appropriate to the old dispensation, but it is inappropriate to the new. What is now required is a prerequisite which more clearly and directly represents the spiritual character of the covenant, to which the typical relationship for so long pointed. The New Testament leaves us in no doubt that such is nothing other than a credible profession of faith in Christ.

SECOND MAIN ISSUE—THE MATTER OF DESCENT

De Witt's second major criticism now remains to be evaluated. Since I maintain that children as such no longer have covenantal significance it follows, according to de Witt, that I deny that God works along the lines of generations, and that therefore I am guilty, in the end, of maintaining a purely individualistic doctrine of conversion.

That God works in families not denied

This kind of criticism is frequently employed against Baptists, and sometimes with justification. But is it justified in my case? I believe not. I ask Dr. de Witt by what logic it follows that to deny the inappropriateness of administering baptism to infants is also to deny that God works along the lines of generations? I happen to believe that God continues to work, though not exclusively so, along the lines of generations (descent) but I fail to see that because I reject the baptism of infants that I am obliged to deny that God works in families.

Communion denied to infants

This no more follows than it follows from the denial of the Lord's supper to infants (which is the usual Reformed practice) that the solidarity of the family is contraverted. If Dr. de Witt feels (as I assume he does) that infants should be denied the Lord's supper until such time as they make a credible profession of faith without seeing this as involving a denial that God works along the lines of generations, why should he argue that when baptism is denied to infants for the same reason there is necessarily implied an assertion that God does not work along the lines of generations? This point is the more cogent in that Israelite children (Exod. 12:26,27 cf. Deut. 6:20 ff.) did participate in the passover, as Jewish children do today. If the argument from family solidarity holds good in the case of infant baptism it must surely hold good in the case of adminstering the Lord's supper to infants as one recent Reformed writer has clearly seen. 'One of the great antipaedobaptist arguments has always been,' writes Colin Buchanan, 'that of reasoning would admit children to holy communion, which is a conclusion paedobaptists resist, thus calling in question their own premises. To this we reply that we do not resist the conclusion at all, but fully concede it. We ought in principle, to admit all the baptised to Holy Communion.' (*Evangelical Essays on Church and Sacraments*, ed. Colin Buchanan, SPCK, London 1972, p. 58.) Buchanan has appreciated what few Reformed

theologians seem able to grasp, namely that if the solidarity of the family is a ground for not denying baptism to infants, it is also a ground for not denying them participation in the Lord's supper as well.

De Witt's complaint about atomism

A further point arises. If not to practise infant baptism as a Reformed Baptist I am left with the 'same atomistic conception' (p. 252) as that against which I protest at the beginning of my book, is not de Witt's presumed refusal to allow infant communion not also based upon an atomistic and individualistic concept of conversion? I point this not simply to illustrate how careful Dr. de Witt should be before throwing around such terms as 'individualistic' and 'atomistic', as if to suggest that all the corporate thinking is on his side and all the individualistic on mine!

Household baptisms

Dr. de Witt sees great significance in the fact that I do not deal with the so-called 'household baptisms' recorded in the New Testament. This he interprets as further evidence of my 'inability to see the covenant principle, the organic principle of God's working through lines of generations' (p. 254). It is in fact nothing of the kind. I simply do not share his confidence that the household baptisms prove his case. In this, of course, I am not alone, nor is this merely a confessional conclusion with the Baptists on one side and the non-Baptists on the other, as de Witt well knows. The well-known controversy between Kurt Aland and Joachim Jeremias, the former contending against the relevance of the household baptisms for infant baptism, and the latter for it, is summed up by a recent Anglican writer as follows: 'Jeremias and Cullman (sic) on the one side and Aland and Beasley-Murray on the other have been fiercely locked in struggle about this particular issue that most of us may be forgiven if we react by saying that whoever is most right has clearly had to prove a very difficult case from highly debatable evidence' (Neville Cryer, *By What Rite?—Infant Baptism in a Missionary Situation*, A. R. Mowbray & Co., London, 1969, p. 56).

Thus Dr. de Witt is not on such strong ground as he thinks when he gives the impression that the 'household baptisms' of the New Testament prove his case.

Infant salvation

Finally Dr. de Witt speaks with a confidence of the salvation of the children of believers which, it should be pointed out, is by no means shared by all of those who contend for the practice of infant baptism. Children are 'the special objects of God's covenantal love' with the implication, from the citation of Psalm 103:17,18 and Acts 2:39, that they will all be saved. But if there are two seeds from Abraham, the prototype believing parent, how can there be such certainty? Can de Witt show that there is now but one elect seed issuing from Christian parents? Has God now abrogated the principle that from the father of believers there is a twofold issue, children of the flesh and children of promise? If so, where in the New Testament do we find it abrogated? And if it is not abrogated, then on the basis of de Witt's argument from silence it must still be reckoned to continue in force, with the consequence that his certainty is misplaced.

It is noteworthy that Herman Hoeksema, a doughty defender of infant baptism, does not share Dr. de Witt's confidence regarding the salvation of all the children of believers who die in infancy. In his discussion of the issue he states the following: 'By reason of the fact that the Lord establishes his covenant in the line of successive generations, believers will confess in gratitude before the Lord that he counts them worthy to bring forth the true seed of the covenant. This true seed of the covenant, however, does not consist of *all* children who are born of them, but only of the children of the promise. Certain it is that believers also bring forth another seed. Now, on this side of death and the grave fleshly ties may draw us, so that we say that we wish to see all our children saved, and do not wish that our own flesh and blood goes lost. But, in the final analysis, also in this respect

the righteous must live out of their faith, not from their flesh. . . . With objective certainty, therefore, there is nothing more to be said of children who die on their infancy than that the Lord saves his seed out of our seed.' (Herman Hoeksema, *Believers and Their Seed*, Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids, 1971, pp. 157-158, author's italics.)

Editorial and personal irresponsibility reproved

I must close this review by expressing my regret that Dr. de Witt should make out that I am pouring an entirely new content into the old words of the historic Christian faith. From one who professes to be concerned for the unity of Reformed brethren such a charge is reprehensible, assuming as it does a deliberate dishonesty on my part which brackets my arguments with the intentional confidence tricks of many modern 're-interpreters' of the Christian faith. One can only express one's sense of shock and sorrow that such a charge should have been allowed to appear in so responsible a publication as the *Westminster Theological Journal*.

Present Day Translations of the Bible

A discussion between Drew Garner and the Editor

Drew Garner is pastor of the Bellaire Reformed Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

EDITOR: We have enjoyed your ministry at Cuckfield and at the family conferences. We have learned much from you, not only about the Gospel, but also in the informal sessions about the birth and growth of the sovereign grace movement in America, an awakening which spells hope for the future. At all times you have read from and preached from the New International Version (N.I.V.) and we can see that you are enthusiastic about it! Why?

DREW GARNER: One of the elders of our church is a classical Greek scholar and with him we have had a share, albeit a small one, in the work of translating and preparing the N.I.V. You know you really ought to get your people to read the preface or introduction to the N.I.V., or any modern translation which they read, that they know what is involved. In this way much needless ignorance and suspicion can be removed.

EDITOR: It is more than suspicion that is involved. This can be, and often is, a subject charged with emotion. It is the same kind of thing you find with those biased against Calvinism. You had better not even mention Calvin's name because some have been preconditioned against any consideration of what he really believed and taught. Likewise there have been agencies at work inculcating the concept that the only Bible to be trusted is the one authorised by King James. As pastors we must ground our people in a knowledge of what their faith does depend on, namely, the two hundred or more manuscripts extant of the New Testament and the Massoretic text of the Old.

DREW GARNER: No one manuscript or group of manuscripts should be ignored. With the Old it is fascinating to see that the Dead Sea Scroll for Isaiah, believed to be 100 B.C., shows no breaks in the text at all to support the liberal idea of second and third Isaiah. As an American I observe that those who sailed to my country in the *Mayflower* banned the King James Version. King James persecuted the Puritans and said he would 'harry them out of the land'. His

Bible is essentially an Anglican version. If ever a translation was designed for one party that one was. I grew up with it and I love it and its qualities but I have come to see that it is essential that we glorify and honour God by worshipping him in our own language. I believe that he commands that the Scriptures be translated into every language in the world including contemporary English. Several reasons dispose me to believe that the N.I.V. will outstrip and outmerit its only real rival which is the N.A.S.B. (The New American Standard Bible.)

EDITOR: As one who originates from the high veld of the Transvaal, I too think it strange that when a thousand other language groups have the Scriptures in their own language, we should be using a language form which is 350 years old. I too grew up with, and have memorised chapters of the K.J.V. Until I am absolutely sure of a better and more reliable translation, as well as the advantages of a change, I think we should stick for pulpit use to the K.J.V.

DREW GARNER: Our Lord did not use ancient Hebrew but spoke the modern Aramaic of his day. I believe we are obligated to use the Scriptures in the language of our day. I find that very important in preaching the Gospel. The context of the Gospel never changes but it is imperative that it be presented in the thought forms of our day lest people think that it is some antiquated thing of the past.

EDITOR: But we have to reckon with the confusion of so many versions. What is the Bible? Ordinary people are not going to understand that the only real Bible is the one originally given and which is preserved for all time in the form of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

DREW GARNER: We have to sort out the wheat from the chaff. For instance, I confess to an intense dislike of the Living Bible because one man has read his own theology into his translation. It is important for us to spend more time thinking about this matter and seeing that there is a world of difference between a one-man effort and a translation like the N.I.V. Also, we must distinguish very carefully between paraphrasing and translation. Edwin Palmer is a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary. He is Chairman of the Committee for the N.I.V. which consists of 70 scholars. He is thoroughly conservative and Reformed and a top rate student. Every section is checked and rechecked both for accuracy and for English style. Readers are invited to write in for further details and I recommend that they do so. I am convinced that the N.I.V. is a winner. There is flexibility to improve and correct before the whole Bible is printed. And the *Evangelical Times* has just given a fine review of Isaiah. In 1979 the Old Testament should be complete. Great care is being devoted to the format of the final product. I am excited about this work. The N.A.S.B. is a good, accurate and reliable translation, but it is wooden. I love the N.I.V. Tremendous work has been expended upon it. When it comes to a pulpit Bible it is not many versions but only two contemporary translations from which to choose, the N.I.V. or the N.A.S.B.

EDITOR: You say you have a strong objection to one of the translations but ought we not to be cautious in our criticism lest we help promote ugly attitudes. When all our suspicions have been weighed, even with the versions of which we are critical like the R.S.V. and N.E.B., we have still to allow for the fact that in spite of the defects these Bibles are still God's Bible, 99.5% so, and therefore have all the potency of the deity of the Holy Spirit to use them as he wills. I feel it is wrong to discourage any naive person from reading what is God's Bible just because we cannot concur with some of the details. That is coming perilously near what our Lord so strongly condemned in the Pharisees, namely, hindering people for party-spirit reasons from entering into the Kingdom. While asserting that, I feel just as strongly as you do about details. For instance

it concerns me very deeply that the word propitiation be retained and I see it has disappeared from the N.I.V. I would not put off a beginner with such a contention but rather ask the scholars why. Do you know why?

DREW GARNER: I also prefer the word 'propitiation' but in the N.I.V. rendering you will see that the meaning has been conveyed very well indeed to a person who might not have anybody to explain the finer meanings of the word 'propitiation'. Note how it is put, 'God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood' (Rom. 3:25).

EDITOR: I have just completed reading the Good News Bible (G.N.B.) Old Testament and despite two or three major blemishes and a number of niggling points, I enjoyed it immensely. I read the Trinitarian Bible Society review of G.N.B. which succeeded in alerting me to see that if we had to adopt the same jaundiced approach to the K.J.V. we could tear it apart. That kind of sheer negativism is only destructive and self-defeating. For instance, the T.B.S. contemptuously dismissed the value of the line drawings and brief introductions to the books. I felt that was completely out of touch from a pastoral point of view. I am talking now about devotional reading only, since we must distinguish very clearly between pulpit use and devotional use of the Bible. In our devotions we are concerned with catching the meaning and a different translation with the use of brief commentaries is very helpful. In the pulpit we are declarative and expository. There is no time for searching then and we must have an absolutely reliable translation as our foundation.

DREW GARNER: Many people have been much more suspicious of the G.N.B. than they need be. Translators have been involved who are evangelical and even conservatively evangelical. I know Robert Bratcher personally and he is believed to be the most gifted Greek Scholar in the world today. He is the one most responsible for the G.N.B. work. He is a Southern Baptist with many years of experience in the mission field. We must remember that they set out to translate the Bible so that twelve-year-olds would understand the language used. My four children used the G.N.B. and graduated to the N.I.V. Remember too, the vast world of people for whom English is a second language. I am not surprised at the enormous success of the G.N.B. which is running into millions of copies. Again, we should read the introductions carefully so that we know what we are talking about and live by facts, not prejudice. But I come back to the N.I.V. which I believe will accomplish both needs—thoroughly reliable for the pulpit in beautiful English, and useful for those for whom English is their second language.

EDITOR: What about the manuscripts used for the N.I.V.? There are those who have been led to believe that only the *textus receptus* forms a reliable basis.

DREW GARNER: Many, it seems to me, have missed the point here. It is not as simple as that. Every text of Scripture has to be considered in the light of all the available manuscripts. A very small percentage of texts are affected, but let me give you just one example, 1 John 5:7. We are as sure as it is possible to be that a well-meaning scribe added a sentence here which is not found in the earlier manuscripts. In the event the scribe has not added anything erroneous, nor has he written anything that we did not know before. But this is an example in which all the manuscripts are consulted not just one group of manuscripts. Progress is being made all the time so that we can expect the standards to go up and happily in many ways we have much more knowledge now to help us than ever before. That is a further reason why I have every confidence that in the right hands the N.I.V. will win the day! So if anyone reading our discussion is concerned and wants to see further improvements, take advantage of being able to write to the N.I.V. translators, for they are as zealous as you are for truth and faithfulness.

The Life of John Hus

by Victor Budgen

AT ONE STAGE OF HIS LIFE, JOHN BUNYAN BELIEVED THAT MARTYRDOM WAS to be his lot. The story to which Bunyan turned for comfort was the account of the death of John Hus. We are fortunate in having a detailed eye-witness account of the trial and death of Hus from the pen of a man called Peter of Mladonovice. Martyrdom might seem a strange end for a man, who by his own frequent admission, originally became a priest in order to have an easy life. But in 1415 a man whom God had greatly changed was on trial for his faith at the Council of Constance before a gathering of cardinals and bishops. Hus had travelled to Constance willingly. Both the emperor Sigismund and the Pope had granted him a safe-conduct, but he knew that he was taking a risk in going into the midst of his enemies.

When Hus arrived he was immediately thrown into prison on the pretext that no faith was to be kept with heretics.

Repeated pleas were made for his release by members of his own party but after being guarded in a house for eight days by armed men, Hus was taken to a monastery near to the lake and in the words of Peter, our chronicler, 'thrust into a murky and dark dungeon in the immediate vicinity of a latrine'. Not surprisingly, he soon fell ill 'of high fever and constipation of the bowels, so that his life was despaired of'. However, his enemies were determined not to let their prey escape so easily and the pope's own physician was sent to attend to him. Hus recovered, but was still left in the foul dungeon. Later he was imprisoned in the fortress of the bishop of Constance.

His rigorous physical confinement by chains and handcuffs continued. Throughout this period he was subject to cross-examination and psychological pressures of various kinds.

The numbing effect of incessant noise and taunts on Hus are mentioned in letters which he sent back to friends at home.

The amazing thing is that Peter can record that John Hus went back to the prison after one especially gruelling interrogation session, 'blessing the people, smiling and merry, joyfully walking despite the mockery'. Hus too was conscious of the 'merry mind and a smile' which the Lord graciously gave him as he listened to a series of charges. At the climax of the trial when Hus declared himself innocent of heresy and determined to stand by God's word, we learn from Peter that 'many, especially the principal clergy looked indignantly and jeered at him'.

His own end was really a foregone conclusion. Peter and two of the Czech lords happened to overhear the Emperor Sigismund declaring that

Hus must be executed whether he recanted or not. His death warrant was signed no matter what he said. In no way was he given a fair hearing. As a prelude to executing him, Hus was dressed up in his priestly garments as though he were about to celebrate the mass. On his head was placed a paper crown which showed a picture of three horrible devils about to seize a soul and tear it to pieces with their claws. He was then undressed, and cursed.

As Hus was led from the church, the scene of his humiliation, he smiled as he saw a bonfire of his own books. Almost the whole of the city turned out to watch him on the road to his death and, as Peter says, many of the lay people instinctively knew that Hus was a good man. He was tied to a stake with ropes, a sooty chain being round his neck and the wood was piled round him up to his chin. Peter goes on: 'When the executioners at once lit the fire, the Master immediately began to sing in a loud voice, at first "Christ, Thou Son of the Living God have mercy upon us", and secondly, "Christ, Thou Son of the Living God, have mercy upon me," and in the third place, "Thou Who art born of Mary the Virgin". And when he began to sing the third time, the wind blew the flame into his face. And thus praying within himself and moving his lips and the head, he expired in the Lord.'

During his stay in prison he had written: 'For the first time I am beginning to understand the book of Psalms'.

Who then was John Hus? He was a Roman Catholic priest, a loyal son of the Church. As a student, Hus had known poverty. 'As I,' he writes, 'when I was a hungry little student, made a spoon out of bread till I had eaten the peas, and then I ate the spoon also'. Life was pleasant as a priest, however. He testifies that he actually became a priest because he wanted to dress well and to secure a good job. As a man of undoubted gifts he became more and more prominent. He was appointed as confessor and court chaplain to the queen of Bohemia. The favour of the queen and of Zbinek, the archbishop of Prague, rested on him! On two occasions he was asked to preach the sermons at the Prague synod. Above all, amongst the students and at the university, he could display his undoubted talents. At a comparatively early age he had been appointed rector of the university. His humour is shown in the lighthearted banter and familiar tones in the speeches he made to his students when they graduated.

On a busy street in modern Prague Hus's house can still be seen. He is remembered by many still as a national hero. For music lovers he will be brought to mind when they listen to two particular tone poems of Smetana or an overture by Dvorak.

Although Hus never lost his warmth, humour and especially the ability to laugh at himself (he was always fond of punning on his own name

which literally means 'Goose') there came an abrupt and sobering change in his life which eventually was to lead to his own death and to a change of heart among many of the inhabitants of Bohemia. That there must have been a period of conflict and see-sawing of emotions as he foresaw what lay ahead is evident. In one letter he speaks of the period when he was afraid to speak out against obvious evils. He was afraid of excommunication or death. But in this letter he shows that the one who had entered the priesthood merely through love of ease and comfort, the one who aimed at tickling the ear of the noble and well-to-do and being popular with the religious leaders and the students he taught, had met a 'gracious Saviour'.

Hus uses different terms from the modern Evangelical. Yet he affirms the same truths. Although he does not use the words 'justification by faith' he constantly writes with the tone and idiom of a justified man. One of his favourite quotations is Luke 17:10 where Christ says, 'So you also, when you have done all this is commanded you, say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty" '. Everywhere he writes as a man deeply conscious of his own unworthiness and of Christ's greatness and glory. His letters are full of Christ's words, Christ's character, Christ's trial and crucifixion and Christ's triumph and return. Here is one sample of the beginning of a letter addressed to 'the Praguers'. 'Master John Hus, an unprofitable servant of God, to all the elect and the zealous for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, who dwell in the city of Prague: "grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour". '

Again, from a letter to his friends in Prague, sent on Christmas Day 1413. The letter is from start to finish an exultant hymn of praise. Here is an extract from the second section:

'A loving brother is born to us, a wise master, a safe leader, a just judge, in order that there may be glory to God in the Highest, etc.

Rejoice you wicked, because the God-priest was born, who grants to every penitent, absolution from all sins, that there may be glory to God in the highest, etc.

Rejoice, because today the bread of angels, namely God, became food for men, to refresh the hungry with His glorious body, that they may have peace on earth.

Rejoice, that the immortal God is born so that mortal men may live in eternity.

Rejoice, because the rich Lord of the universe lies in a manger as poor, that he may enrich us needy ones.'

Hus's fervour for the Saviour is equally displayed in the following excerpt from his famous work *The Church*. 'Christ is the bishop who baptises

and takes away the sins of the world, John 1:29. He is the one who joins in marriage so that no man may put asunder: "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder," Matthew 19:6. He is the one who makes us priests, "He made us a kingdom and priests" Revelation 1:8. He performs the sacrament of the eucharist, saying: "This is my body," Luke 22:19. This is he who confirms his faithful ones: "I will give you a mouth of wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to withstand or gainsay," Luke 21:15. He it is who feeds his sheep by his word and example and by the food of his body.'

One man who was to prove quite a considerable influence on Hus was John Wycliffe. He was primarily a translator and expositor of the Bible, who saw it as his mission to encourage others in the same calling. One of the places where Wycliffe's books were eagerly read was Bohemia (now Czechoslovakia). Prior to Hus himself there had been several good biblical preachers in Bohemia. They no doubt influenced Hus as also did the writings of Wycliffe. Yet above all it would seem that it was a study of the Bible itself that changed Hus.

Everywhere in his writings the scripture is his standard. He constantly reveals a tremendous grasp of the Bible and some of his letters are almost a maze of biblical quotations. Some fine biblical exposition forms the basis of his work, *On Simony*, in which he asserts on almost the first page that the 'Holy Scriptures' are to be his rule. True to this promise he expounds incident after incident from the pages of the bible and asserts the superiority of truth to all custom. In this connection he quotes with approval Cyprian who said, 'Custom without truth is an old error; accordingly, abandoning the error, let us follow the truth'.

This too is Hus's standpoint in his work on *The Church.* As well as insisting that the canonical scriptures are infallible, cannot be broken and must therefore be the test of all other writings, he declares with reference to statements of the pope (called bulls); 'For to holy Scripture exception may not be taken, nor may it be gainsaid; but it is proper at times to take exception to bulls and gainsay them when they either commend the unworthy or put them in authority, or savor of avarice, or honor the unrighteous or oppress the innocent, or implicitly contradict the commands or counsels of God.'

Far from merely asserting the authority of scripture Hus was determined by God's grace to apply it. This he did with searching power and with great effectiveness. One of his most constant targets was the simony and greed of the clergy in general and the money-grabbing spirit of the papacy in particular. In *On Simony* Hus described how this wrongful spirit had entered into most aspects of the life of the church. That he was not the only one to notice and deplore this trend can easily be established.

The Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was written some half

century before Hus's day. Chaucer shows us the glitter of gold, the chink of coins, the fleecing of unsuspecting layfolk. His sleek, fat monk with his shining bald head had round his sleeve 'fine grey fur, the finest in the land' and near his chin 'a wrought gold cunningly fashioned pin'. Next to him the friar gave penances easily as long as the fee was forthcoming. Nor was the Summoner a man of finer conscience.

> He would allow—just for a quart of wine—
> Any good lad to keep a concubine.

The strong views and outspoken comments of Hus on these matters were to lead him into conflict with the authorities. The whole papal system was built on a system of payments and fees for promotion to bishoprics etc. In time, Hus clashed with Archbishop Zbinek on this issue. Hus told him that simoniacs were 'false prophets'. He did not mince his words. Nor did Hus spare the bishops themselves and the cardinals. It hardly seems likely that Hus had read the fifteenth century equivalent of 'How to win friends and influence people' judging by his strictures on the clergy of his day. Many bishops were, in his view, 'unworthy and not fit even to herd swine properly'. Another of his charges was that immorality was widespread. Again we must ask whether he was exaggerating. Apparently not. A visitation in 1379 in Bohemia convicted of immorality sixteen clergymen out of thirty who were visited.

Not surprisingly the local clergy detested Hus. During the period from 1410 onwards, Hus was also in perpetual trouble due to excommunications from his own archbishop (1410), and Cardinal Colonna (1411). Finally there came a clash with the pope himself over indulgences. Like Luther later on, Hus also wondered why a kind pope needed money before he released souls from purgatory! Why did he not do it out of sheer love? Moreover indulgences had become cheap tickets to heaven. Hus objected. All this led to tremendous conflict. It alienated former friends for good. It divided the community. There was much unrest. That the church should not persecute and put to death is the consistent argument of Hus in his work on *The Church.* Others among his contemporaries thought differently. Violence erupted in Prague at various times and there were ugly scenes. Students were the same then as now and there were numerous processions and 'protest' marches by supporters of Hus who, as well as having enemies, also had a large group of 'friends'. Perhaps he could have done without some of the latter! That there was a nationalistic element cannot be denied. Hus was particularly popular amongst some because he stood for the native Bohemian element in the university which had for a long time been dominated by Germans whose powers had recently been largely taken away.

Prague must have been a lively city to live in at this time! At one stage an incensed Archbishop Zbinek was lighting up the sky-line with lurid flames as he caused a pile of two hundred books by Wycliffe to be burned

in a large bonfire and thus be removed from inquiring eyes. Many who took the part of Hus were furious about this. Others supported the archbishop. On the occasion of the sale of the pope's indulgences, three young men, Martin, John and Stasek protested vehemently at various churches. They were arrested but, after Hus himself pleaded for leniency, the councillors agreed not to be severe. However, they broke their word and promptly beheaded the young men. Later Hus praised the young men for defending the truth.

Hus particularly calls on the layman as well as the priest to defend the truth. This is a theme which recurs in his works. If the shepherd does not feed the sheep but instead shears them, then the sheep ought to have the sense to detect this! Elsewhere he exclaims, 'But I have found that ordinary poor priests and poor laymen—even women—defend the truth more zealously than the doctors of the Holy Scriptures, who, out of fear, run away from the truth and have not courage to defend it. I myself —alas—had been one of them, for I did not dare to preach the truth plainly and openly.'

It was in fact supremely through preaching that Hus was to influence people. He preached regularly at the Bethlehem chapel in Prague. It has been estimated that he preached some 3,000 sermons there. Writing to the English Lollard (a follower of Wycliffe) called Richard Wyche, Hus says that the light of truth is 'under the direction of our Saviour . . . ardently received by the multitude, the lords, knights, burgers, and the common people'. Elsewhere, he declares in a letter to King Sigismund, 'I have taught nothing in secret, but in public, for my ministry was attended mostly by masters, bachelors, priests, barons, knights and many others. . . .'

There must also have been some dramatic moments in the services. As Hus came more and more into conflict with the church of Rome, he soon forfeited the support of Zbinek, the archbishop, who then employed spies to note down Hus's sermons. On one occasion Hus, spotting such an informer, cried out in the service, 'Write it down you skulker, and carry it to that place'. (Here Hus pointed to the palace of the archbishop.)

How would he have preached? Surely the large gatherings who attended his ministry for many years, together with the approach of his writings give us the clue. He was always down-to-earth and scriptural. On the question of indulgences, Hus points out that mortal man cannot forgive sins. Yet he does not use abstract language. 'What a strange thing! They cannot rid themselves of fleas and flies, and yet want to rid others of the torments of hell. . . .'

When Hus was finally exiled from Prague after preaching there twelve years, he went away exhausted by conflict to stay in a castle in Southern Bohemia. He did not stay silent either with his pen or his mouth. In this period he wrote much and also engaged in constant open-air preaching.

It is thrilling to note that after his own martyrdom there were several Evangelical groups which stood firm by the word in this area.

Hus loved preaching. He was not lengthy. In fact he instructed one priest to preach 'assiduously, but briefly'. However, on the role of the preacher he entertained no doubts. 'Preachers in my judgement count in the church for more than prelates,' he declared. And from his pen comes one of the finest descriptions of true gospel preaching that has ever been put to paper when he said, 'By the help of God I have preached, still am preaching, and if His grace will allow, shall continue to preach; if perchance I may be able to lead some poor, tired, or halting soul into the house of Christ to the King's supper.'

Like all others who really begin to study the scriptures, Hus was guided gradually. For example, it is evident from his letters and his great work on the church that he never finally abandoned belief in purgatory although he did write that 'it is safer to live well, than to expect release after death by the aid of others'. It would also appear likely that he continued to hold to some Roman Catholic belief about the mass, although he was quite convinced that according to scripture the congregation should receive both the bread and the wine.

In *The Church* Hus does refer to Mary and seems to say that she is higher in dignity than Peter. However, this and one other insignificant reference to her is just about the sum total in this massive work on the church. The kernel of Hus's position is that there is only one Head of the Church who is infallible and this is Jesus Christ. Hus was in fact moving to a biblical understanding that there are only two aspects of the church in the New Testament, the total and the local, and a strong and vigorous doctrine of the local church emerges constantly in the pages of *The Church.* Following Jerome, Hus explains to his reader that also in New Testament times the bishop and presbyter were the same person, in other words a known local figure.

Quoting his favourite author Augustine, Hus also stresses that the minister should be someone who has in a sense proved himself. 'To the episcopal dignity, no one should be elected who has not learned to administer a lower office; for the command of the boat should not be entrusted to a man who cannot wield an oar. . . .'

For expressing such views Hus himself was banned from preaching as the city of Prague was put under an interdict. This meant, as Hus himself made clear, that whenever he had been in a city, village or castle, no preaching would be allowed until three days after his departure.

In exile he writes repeatedly to his congregation back in Prague. 'My beloved brothers in Christ, cobblers, tailors and scribes,' is how he begins one such letter. Personal greetings abound. In particular the prominence of laymen amongst the friends of Hus must not be overlooked. It was

very significant. Along with others, Hus defended the right of the laity to preach the word of God. He knew that very often they were truly Christian and bible-loving where the clergy were not. In fact he refers to the prohibition of preaching by the leading clergy as 'being in the spirit of the pagans and Pharisees'. Three of the laymen who were most loyal to Hus were Jerome of Prague, who was himself to be burned for his faith almost exactly one year after Hus himself, and two noblemen called John of Chlum and Wenceslas of Duba. These latter two men accompanied him to his trial at Constance.

As the group of Bohemians travelled up to Constance, before Hus was arrested, John of Chlum who was well versed in the Scriptures, argued so strenuously with the priests in some of the towns that they were amazed and tauntingly nicknamed him 'Doctor Biberbach'. This means 'Doctor of theology' and the title must have delighted Hus for he often jokingly refers to him by it in his letters. But what must have delighted Hus most of all was that when he stood condemned before an almost totally hostile audience, John of Chlum, who was present, strode across the room and took him by the hand. In a letter, Hus later recalls this incident. He remembers this act of loyal kindness. 'Oh how comforting was Lord John's stretching of his hand to me . . . to me a wretched, despised heretic, bound in chains and cursed by almost all.'

His fellow clergy who loved the gospel, received constant reminders in letters from him that they were to be faithful in holding and preaching the word of God. Many letters to Martin, to Peter of Mladonovice, to Christian of Prachatice and to Havlik, his successor at the Bethlehem chapel, survive. For it must not be thought that Hus was a voice in the wilderness. By this time God had raised up other men. In one letter, punning on his own name Hus put it beautifully. He is writing against the background of his own exile. 'In place of one preacher . . . He gave them twelve and more. That same Truth in place of one faint-hearted 'goose', gave Prague many eagles and falcons, who have keen sight, soar high by grace, and skillfully catch birds for the king, Lord Jesus.' After Hus's death, there were other faithful men such as Jakoubek of Stribo who carried on the work. The followers of Hus were called the evangelical clergy—*clerus evangelicus.*

Yet, the influence of Hus stretched further. At first Martin Luther was very resentful of being linked with Hus whom his own church had taught him to think of as a heretic. At this time he had not read the writings of Hus. As soon as Luther began to look for himself, his attitude changed. He was soon writing to a friend. 'Thus far I have, although unconsciously, proclaimed all that Hus preached and maintained; John Staupitz did unconsciously maintain the same—in a word, we are all Hussites without having known it; Paul and Augustine themselves are Hussites—in the full sense of the word! Behold the horrible misery which came upon us

because we did not accept the Bohemian doctor for our leader. . . .' As Luther discovered more of Hus's writings, he ensured their publication. In one letter Luther exclaimed enthusiastically, 'Oh! that my name were worthy to be associated with such a man.'

There is in the University of Prague an old Hussite Hymn book. In it are three pictures. They beautifully illustrate the handing on of truth. In the first picture John Wycliffe is seen striking sparks from a stone. In the second, John Hus is depicted as kindling coals from the sparks. In the third we see Martin Luther brandishing a flaming torch.

We can say with Luther—may our names be worthy to be associated with such men!

CORRESPONDENCE (*continued from page 14*)

Lewis' *Genius of Puritanism*, Winslow's *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Jock Purves *Fair Sunshine*, Walt Chantry's *Today's Gospel*, Bruce Hunt's *For a Testimony*, Ryle's *Five English Reformers*, F. S. Leahy *Satan Cast Out*, Rose Huston's *Jeanette Li*, several of Geoff Wilson's commentaries and some of the larger Banner Geneva Series of commentaries have been bought.

5. I have been able to encourage some members to attend Bible Rallies where they have benefitted from an excellent biblical ministry.

6. In the near future we are planning to have a quarterly united Prayer Meeting and Bible Study (ourselves and three local free grace churches), where our people will be regarded and treated as the Lord's People and not spiritual lepers as is sadly so often the case in situations like ours.

7. We have been instrumental in providing fellowship for a neighbouring B.U. minister whose sympathies now lie with us rather than with the liberal B.U. trends.

8. This point is more in the nature of a question than an observation. Should the few evangelical, anti-Ecumenical and Reformed men within the B.U. (or at least Pastoring B.U. churches) not be making their voices heard at Union gatherings? where we are generally conspicuous by our absence.

May I also plead for a little more honesty in regard to reports in some reformed periodicals about congregations who come out of the B.U. Don't mistake my meaning, I am all for this, and rejoice with every congregation that is able to take this course of action, but, we ought to be informed of the havoc, diversion and heartbreak that often accompanies such actions, with the result that there are often two congregations, instead of one, the one being ministered to by a 'sound man', the other by, probably a liberal, so that all that has been achieved is that 50% of the congregation now have the wrong kind of ministry, and the testimony to the world is ruined (this applies especially in rural areas).

I look forward eagerly to the next issue of *Reformation Today*.

Yours in the bonds of the Gospel. J.H.

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Editor
ERROLL HULSE
5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 3EF.

Assistant Editor
IAN RANDALL
27 Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, Sussex. RH17 5HA.

Associate Editors
DAVID KINGDON, South Africa
7 Malaga, 12 Jacobson Drive, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria 0002.
JOHN DAVISON, Scotland.
12 Keir Street, Perth.
JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa.
22 Verbenia Street, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria 0002.
STUART FOWLER, Australia.
58 Adam Crescent, Montmorency, Victoria 3094, Australia.
WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.
P.O. Box 2317, Sulphur, La. 70663, U.S.A.

Agents
Agents to whom subscriptions should be sent.

BRITISH ISLES	*P.O. Box 106, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 1QL.*
AUSTRALIA	*Ray Levick, P.O. Box Q141, Queen Victoria Bldg., Sydney 2001.*
NEW ZEALAND	*Michael Drake, P.O. Box 51075, Pakuranga, Auckland*
U.S.A.	*Ron Edmonds, 4401 Rose Avenue, Long Beach, California 90807.*
	J. W. Baker, Box 1061, Bay City, Texas 77414.
CANADA	*Max Latchford, 1308 Griffith Place, Oakville, Ontario L6H 2V8.*
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